

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2545

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 377

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON AND AID DEPUTY
ADMINISTRATOR NOOTER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SY

SUBJ: FIRST STEP TO IMPLEMENT AID PROGRAM FOR SYRIA:
MINERALS SURVEY

REFS: A. DAMASCUS 0211; B. DAMASCUS 0360

1. REFTELS SUMMARIZE REMARKABLY DETAILED GROUNDWORK ACCOMPLISHED BY AID SURVEY TEAM IN SYRIA DURING THEIR JANUARY 12 TO 31 VISIT. FOR POLITICAL IMPACT, CONSIDER THAT OF ALL THE POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES REQUESTED OF US IN AREAS TECHNICAL AND PROJECT ASSISTANCE (DAMASCUS 0375) OUR FIRST RESPONSE SHOULD BE TO DESIGNATE AND SEND ASAP US TEAM TO EXAMINE EXISTING MINERALS RESOURCES STUDIES.

2. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HAYDAR STRESSED TO ME FEB 1 THAT WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT OF ITS MINERALS RESOURCES SYRIA CANNOT ASPIRE TO RAPID ECONOMIC PROGRESS. WHILE AGRICULTURE IS COUNTRY'S BASIC NATIONAL WEALTH AND HE ANTICIPATES GREAT VALUE FROM US ASSISTANCE IN THIS AREA, HE STRESSED SYRIAN HOPES FOR OUR EXAMINATION EXISTING MINERAL STUDIES INCLUDING COUNTRY-WIDE SURVEY DONE BY THE SOVIETS IN RECENT YEARS.

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3. IF TEAM COULD BE DESIGNATED DURING FEBRUARY, I.E.,
EVEN BEFORE CURRENT 30-DAY CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW PERIOD
OF PROPOSED SYRIAN AID PROGRAM IS COMPLETED ON FEB 24,
PRESUME IT WOULD BE COMPOSED SOLELY OF US OFFICIALS
FROM AID, USGS, ETC. TEAM WOULD COMPLEMENT EFFORTS
EMBASSY HAS BEEN MAKING TO ENCOURAGE US OIL COMPANIES
TO COME HERE FOR DISCUSSION EXPLORATION CONTRACTS.

4. COMMENT: EARLY DESIGNATION OF TEAM WOULD GIVE
SECRETARY DURING UPCOMING TRIP CHANCE TO CITE AS EVIDENCE
HOW SERIOUSLY WE TAKE SYRIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ASPIRATIONS.
MURPHY

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